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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2522
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2457
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1646
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0582
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0623
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1879
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1496
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 8011
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 1072
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 9479
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8637
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0109
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002911

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DEPT FOR SCA BOUCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/25/2011
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [LK](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: JAPAN REP AKASHI PREVIEWS CO-CHAIRS MEETING

Classified By: DCM Joe Donovan. Reason: 1.4 (b)(d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Japan Representative for Sri Lanka Peace-Building Akashi told the DCM on May 24 that the May 30 Co-Chair Meeting in Tokyo comes at a crucial point in the peace process and expressed hope that it will be a comprehensive meeting leading to a consensus on the way forward. Both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE have issues to address, and while the government should be held to policies that will not further alienate the Tamil population, the LTTE should be urged to choose diplomacy over military actions, he said. Commenting on FM Samaraweera's recent visit to Tokyo, Akashi said the Sri Lanka government now appears to have high expectations for the upcoming Co-Chairs Meeting. Akashi believes the Co-Chairs should discuss the role of other, non-Co-Chair countries, particularly India, Canada and the UK. He expressed appreciation for the U.S. role and the value of U.S.-Japan collaboration within the Co-Chairs setting. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The DCM called on Yasushi Akashi, Representative of the Government of Japan on Peace-Building, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka, on May 24 to learn Japan's positions prior to the May 30 Co-Chairs Meeting that Akashi will host in Tokyo. Akashi praised the U.S.' "important" involvement, and said the peace process is now at a "critical point." Akashi said the April 28 Oslo Co-Chairs Meeting had produced a very short joint statement, but he hoped the Tokyo meeting would conduct a "serious, comprehensive stock-taking." He wants participants to evaluate what has been achieved -- and not achieved -- and then chart a future course. Both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE have responsibilities to assume, he stated, and meeting participants will consider both "hard" and "soft" options that could affect the situation. The group may also consider financial control measures and arms import restrictions to Tamil controlled areas.

¶3. (C) Since the Oslo meeting, Japan has been encouraging India, with its relatively strong influence in Sri Lanka, to play a greater role in the Sri Lanka peace process, Akashi said. It is up to India to decide what role it can play, he suggested, adding he understood that India did not want to identify itself as a full Co-Chair member. Akashi hopes

India will become more involved not only at the Tokyo meeting, but beyond, and said that based on his talks with FM Saran and NSA Narayanan, he believes New Delhi is seriously considering a larger role. Akashi also hopes the Co-Chairs will consider broadening the contact group to include other countries with possible influence, citing the UK and Canada, which have relatively large Tamil populations, as candidates to play a greater part. Akashi said he believes the Co-Chairs group needs to remain loose and flexible in order to remain effective.

¶4. (C) Akashi feels civil organizations can play an influential role in Sri Lanka, and said he makes a point of visiting with one or two NGOs each time he visits. Noting Japan and Sri Lanka's shared Buddhist heritage, he said Japan is encouraging Japanese Buddhist organizations to engage with moderate counterparts in Sri Lanka, in an effort to isolate extremist Buddhist groups.

¶5. (C) Asked to provide a readout of FM Samaraweera's May 17-21 visit to Tokyo, Akashi replied that the Sri Lanka government appears to have high expectations for the upcoming Co-Chairs Meeting. The government is frustrated with its inability to persuade the LTTE to return to the negotiating table, and also frustrated by the LTTE's armed attacks. The Government of Sri Lanka would like to see other countries with large Tamil populations designate the LTTE as a terrorist organization, as the U.S. has done. Then the international community could take measures to stop financial contributions, which enable the LTTE to purchase arms. Although FM Samaraweera conveyed the government's willingness to abolish certain discriminatory policies, Akashi said the Co-Chairs should encourage it to go further so that Tamils inside and outside the country see the government's gesture of lifting restrictions as the way for moving forward.

¶6. (C) Summing up his analysis on the situation in Sri Lanka following the Co-Chairs meeting, Akashi said he hoped the LTTE would be persuaded that diplomacy is its best option and end its armed struggle. However, Akashi said he was familiar with the LTTE's past behavior and preferences, and admitted his thinking might be wishful. "This is our strong hope," he said, "whether the LTTE will give up arms remains to be seen."
SCHIEFFER